

Bandwagon

Vol. 6, No. 2-3—MARCH-APRIL, 1951

15c

Your President Writes a Letter

It is with the deepest of regrets that I have received a letter of resignation from Harry Simpson as Editor of the "Bandwagon," a spot that he took over in 1947.

The Circus Historical Society and I, your President, have nothing but the finest words of praise for Harry. When John Van Matre resigned and I as Vice-President took over, CHS had hit its lowest ebb. We had the sum of \$7.00 in the treasury, and Harry volunteered to assume the printing and mailing of the "Bandwagon," a stint that he did for free gratis for one solid year.

Now due to the death of his father he has had to assume the entire responsibility of the printing office and that takes up his time along with various other duties so that he is unable to keep on as Editor of "Bandwagon."

For the past five years through the help of Harry Simpson and the past two years of Bob King, CHS has made rapid strides. We now have a substantial balance in our treasury, our membership is now composed of real collectors, people interested in the clubs, and its standards.

Bob King as chairman, is lining up a fine Convention to be held in Cincinnati, August 3-4-5, full details of which will be in the May issue. There will be an issue of Bandwagon EVERY month from now on, plus the Historical pictures due the members. The majority of dues are due May 1, so look on your membership card and if they are due, send them in.

Looking forward to seeing you all in Cincinnati.

Sincerely your President,

BETTE LEONARD.

The Circusiana Magazine

HOBBY

Bandwagon

122 South Main Street
Camden, Ohio

Entered as second-class matter at the
post office in Camden, Ohio, under the
act of March 3, 1879. Printed in U.S.A.

MARCH-APRIL, 1951

Vol. 6

No. 2-3

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15c a single copy
\$1.00 a year in U.S.A.

Advertising rates—
\$1.00 per col. inch

Permission to copy articles in this maga-
zine must be secured from both author
and publisher.

STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP

Management, etc., of the Hobby-
Bandwagon, as required by an act of
Congress, August 24, 1912; Hobby-
Bandwagon, published monthly at Cam-
den, Ohio.

Owner, publisher, editor and manager,
Harry M. Simpson, Camden, Ohio.

Mortgagee: None.

HARRY M. SIMPSON
Publisher

Subscribed and sworn before me this
25th day of September, 1950.

LOUISE SIMPSON,
Notary Public.

The Editor Says

This month I am taking over
as Editor of the Bandwagon. This
is a new experience for me, and
I'm a little in the dark as to what
is expected of me. For this
reason, I am asking each of you
to be my assistant—to send me
articles and stories of historic
value; to send in photos which
you think might be used in the
Banwagon. I want to continue to
get out a magazine that will have
the interest and value that Harry
Simpson has always had, and I
will try my very best to do this.
Its not going to be easy—far
from it. BUT—with your help
—each and every one of you—
I will strive to do it. Come on
and help me!

AGNES W. KING

— DON'T FORGET —

CHS CONVENTION AT
CINCINNATI

August 3-4-5, 1951

Until further notice, please
send all news and stories to be
published in the Bandwagon to:

AGNES W. KING
P. O. Box 235
Richmond, Indiana

Buffalo Bill Train in England

Information on a 1903 railway movement for Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show in England, as reprinted by The World's Fair, British amusement paper, March 3, 1951:

Show train was to be moved "in accordance with the instructions laid down for the working of the Royal Train."

Records copied were for Saturday, June 20, moving between Coventry and Rugby. Equipment used earlier by Barnum & Bailey was used. All cars were 54 feet long and 8 feet wide. The 8-foot width extended downward to 7½ inches of the tracks. All had Westinghouse motors and vacuum brakes. Sleepers were red. All other cars were orange.

All but 8 of the cars had American couplings. The 8 exceptions were 7 stock cars and 1 baggage car, and these had American couplings at one end and English couplings at the other. One of these eight cars had to be placed at each end of each section of the show train in order to couple the English rail equipment to the American show train.

The first section included: Engine, a 3rd class brake carriage, 1 double coupling stock car, 7 regular stock cars, 5 sleepers, 1 double coupling stock car, a 3rd class brake carriage.

The second section had: Engine, a 3rd class brake carriage, 1 double coupling stock car, 15 flat cars, 1 double coupling baggage car, a 3rd class brake carriage.

The third section had: Engine, 1 double coupling stock car, 7 flat cars, 5 stock cars, 3 sleepers, 1 box sleeper, 1 double coupling stock car, a 3rd class brake carriage.

Apparently, 3rd class brake carriages were the equivalent of cabooses and were not used to carry show equipment or people. Moving in three sections, only six of the special-coupling cars were needed. The other two stocks must go together and are listed along with the regular stocks in this list.

It doesn't say why 3rd class brake carriages are used at the head of two sections but not of the third.

There were 55 cars in the trains, counting the brake carriages. Presumably, therefore, there were 50 show-owned cars.

John M. Kelly, Baraboo, Wisconsin, is slowly recovering from an auto accident. His son Harlan, noted blind lawyer has been forced to give up his law practice and return to Baraboo due to illness. The son had to have one leg amputated due to diabetes. John Kelley is finishing "Rain or Shine" and expects it to be printed this spring.

Merle Evans and his circus Band have made a series of new band recordings. An album of these records includes "Quality Plus," "Sunny Land Waltzes," "Royal Bridesmaids," "Entry of the Gladiators" and "Bull Trombone."

P. RIKER donation 1/98

Sells--Floto Circus, 1923

Sept. 5, 1923, Dixon, Ill.—“One day only, read the bills for Sells Floto Circus and Buffalo Bill Wild West.

“This is the world’s greatest circus with five rings and two stages, herds of elephants, a continental zoo, gorgeous lyrical spectacle, ‘A Night In Persia.’ The show brings 2100 people and horses with the world’s largest street parade.”

Of the performers the agent said, “Blood will tell.” Three years ago Erma Ward, now the 19-year old star of the Sells Floto Circus, was in school at Peoria, Ill. A member of her family desired that she go east to a famous music conservatory. Instead she joined out, she had an idea she could hang by one hand and throw her body over countless times, excuting the most difficult of aerial feats, the one-arm somersault. Seasoned performers are unable to do it once but Erma accomplishes it 40 times. Within three months she was the star of the season. She and Mamie Ward, who is the only woman to turn a double somersault in midair to a hand-to-hand catch, spend their spare time knitting. Bee Starr is a dainty artist of the troupe headed by Mamie Ward and Edward Ward and known as The Flying Wards.

The above is another of Bob Taber’s fine press releases, from his fine collection of same.

James E. Cooper, known all over the country as one of the best circus managers, died in 1892 on January 2 in Philadelphia, Pa. Mr. Cooper was at different times a partner of Barnum, Bailey, Cole, Hutchinson, O’Brien and Hemmings. He also was the proprietor of the Adam Forepaugh and had been in circus business since he was fifteen. When he died his fortune was estimated to be \$1,800,000.

The first millionaire circus owner was W. W. Cole.

Ed. Cripps has just bought a book from the local bookstore that you fellows may be interested in called Little Annie Oakley and other Rugged People, by Stewart H. Holbrook, published by The Macmillan Co., N. Y. 1948.

ISRAEL’S FIRST CIRCUS HARD PRESSED FOR MEAT

TEL AVIV, (AP)—The first circus in this country has celebrated its first anniversary gaily, although under somewhat austere circumstances.

The circus, an ex-soldiers’ co-operative enterprise, which has its tents in Ramat Gan, near Tel Aviv, has no lions because the food controller cannot allocate them enough meat. There is enough fish fillet in the country, but lions don’t like it. A bear act could be booked only because the bear’s owner undertook to bring the honey with him.

Reprinted from Palladium-Item, April 5, 1951

Page 4—Hobby-Bandwagon, March-April, 1951

How Pete Conklin Became A Clown

Pete Conklin (not related to P. Conklin of Brantford, was touring with the E. J. Mabie Circus through the south in the days when circus life was one of opposition fights. Murders were being committed and circus people were more or less rough-housed.

Tony Pastor the celebrated clown of the age was with Mabie show as featured clown. When he heard that the show was to tour through Texas he refused to go with the show. This left the show without a clown. John Conklin, the eldest brother of Pete Conklin, was approached by the Mabie Bros. as to what could be done. John was an acrobat with the show and he said, "I'm sure that Pete can do it," and Pete took on the chore with great success from the start.

He was a great hit but on pay day he found that even so his salary did not rise accordingly and being unable to get the Mabie's to give him more money he went to a livery stable to hire a team and rig to take him to the nearest railroad station. Instead the liveryman sold him a team of mules and wagon for \$75.00 with which he went back to the show and set up a stand outside the circus grounds selling lemonade and other things. He made some money at this and the circus management realized that a circus without a clown just wasn't a circus so the Mabie's gave Pete Conklin his salary and besides bought his mules and wagon for \$250.00. Peter Conklin went on from there to be one of the great circus clowns of the age.

Animals Are Smart

Frank Bostock the famous oldtime wild animal trainer once said, "The greatest lion trainers must be men of the best personal integrity, who smoke and drink very little, if at all, and who possess self-control to an unusual degree. This is a fact that is very little known and seems to be difficult to realize by those that have not studied the matter that in some curious manner wild animals know instinctively whether men are addicted to bad habits. It is one of the problems which are beyond human understanding. For it is a fact that for those that are the least bit inclined to drink or lead a loose life, the wild animal has neither fear nor respect. He despises them with all the contempt of his animal nature, and recognizes neither their authority nor superiority.

DID YOU KNOW?

That twice the girth of an elephant's foot is the height to its shoulder.

Brit Roth, 87 Years Young

WRITES FOR ALLENTOWN PAPER

From Maitland, Fla., George L. Chindahl writes that he is a circus fan with particular interest in the old-time little-known shows, and in pursuit of this hobby seeks information about the Coup, Snyder-Zimmerman circus which exhibited in Allentown May 11-13, 1893. He admits appearance of that circus in Allentown was quite some time ago but he was fully convinced the information could be obtained from local newspaper files of the 1890 period, a belief in which he was quite right.

He explains he wrote to Robert D. Good of Allentown, to whom he refers as a "fellow circus fan," but that Mr. Good was unable to furnish the desired information. Mr. Good, a son of County Commissioner Robert F. Good, and Mr. Chindahl are old-time circus chums, both having been with the big Ringling-Barnum-Bailey "Greatest Show on Earth." Mr. Good keeps his circus days vividly in mind by setting aside one of the rooms at his 1609 Turner St. home as a circus museum filled with miniature show wagons and posters.

A copy of the Chronicle and News of May 11, 1893, gave the necessary information sought by Mr. Chindahl. A three-inch single column advertisement informed the public that the "Largest 10 and 20 Cent Show on Earth" would be in Allentown May 11-13 on a plot on 10th St., between Linden and Turner.

* * *

W. C. Coup's Trained Animal Exposition was combined with Snyder and Zimmerman's All Feature Shows. "We give you quality not quantity, horses that almost talk, dogs that will make you laugh," the advertisement stated, with special exploitation of educated donkeys. How the performances and other features of the circus were received by the public is revealed in the Chronicle and News of the following day, May 12, in this short review:

"COUP'S CIRCUS LAST NIGHT

—W. C. Coup's show catered to an audience last night that crowded the tent to its utmost capacity. The performance was an admirable one, the main feature being its magnificently trained horses. There are 15 of them and their performance is only equalled by that of Bartholomew's Equine Paradox. The afternoon performance also drew a fair crowd in spite of the many outdoor attractions. The show will be here today and tomorrow—exhibitions in the afternoon and evening."

* * *

Mr. Chindahl explains in his letter that it is "unlikely that any handbills or pictures have survived the Coup, Snyder-Zimmerman Circus, but if any should be discovered I should be glad to acquire them. I understand the show was organized in South Bethlehem in the spring of 1893. The opening stand was in that city, the second in Allentown, later at Ashland, Pa., May 26-27. I do not know whether it was a wagon or a railroad show. Coup was a brother of W. C. Coup, the circusman who persuaded P. T. Barnum to join him in launching the circus that became known as P. T. Barnum's and later Barnum and Bailey. I do not know where Snyder and Zimmerman hailed from."

Ye Old Timer has no recollection of the Coup, Snyder-Zimmerman circus. Should there be any old timers who can recall that aggregation of the 1890's I will be glad to receive any information on the subject. I do have a recollection of a show coming to Allentown about 1866 or 1867, a quarter of a century before the Coup, Snyder-Zimmerman Circus appearance. So far as my recollection goes it was on a plot somewhere near 8th and Linden Sts., or the block on the east side of 8th between Linden and Turner. I have a firm belief it was Barnum's Circus. It played in a single tent and on a rainy night. I recall one elephant standing on its hind legs and belching a loud sonorous sound. We youngsters were electrified and couldn't sleep that night. Should any old-timers recall the circus I will be glad to hear from them.

(Continued next month)

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Founded in 1939

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